

DUST AND ASHES

i am losing the eternal battle against dust and ashes
here at the farmhouse, where it is going on seven
years that i've been living, longer than at

any other place in my forty-seven years, outside
of living with my parents as a child. dust
accumulates on the long wooden floors, and

just when i think i have made some headway
with it, it shows me how very wrong i am
by parading out new armies of dust i could never
even imagine existing. but i should be
used to all this by now; it has always been
this way. and the ashes, the ashes from
the fireplace, somehow they escape
from the fireplace itself and they start
migrating to neighboring rooms, threatening
to permanently settle in them.

i just have to remember to clean the
fireplace out often, taking the ashes out
to the edge of the woods in a large
brown shopping bag. and then there are
the really fine ashes from the constant
burning of incense. these are especially
tricky to pick up. it's a royal pain,
i have to admit. and for some obscure
reason the room where i have the typewriter
in the window facing west towards
phoenicia, in this room very little
cleaning is done whatsoever.

dust and ashes seem appropriate here.
usually in the ashtray, for
instance, there are large turd-shaped
ashes which were knocked off
my cigars. i like to smoke when
at the typewriter. a dirty habit,

i know. it's just that
the cigar does such a good job
of absorbing the tension
between my teeth, when i realize
again that i have nothing
to say, that perhaps
only dust and ashes are worth
any mention.